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## CLASSIFICATION

Approved For Release 1999/09/27 : CIA-RDP82-00457R00410

# INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Colombia

**CONFIDENTIAL**

DATE DISTR. 16 JAN 50

**SUBJECT** Labor Situation in Colombia

NO. OF PAGES

PLACE 25X1A  
ACQUIRED 

NO. OF ENCLS.

DATE OF INFO. [REDACTED] 25X1X  
25X1X

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

1. Ventura Puentes Vanegas, Communist leader and Secretary General of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC), recently informed the Central Committee that the Union de Trabajadores Colombianos (UTC) is planning to hold a meeting in Manizales, Department of Caldas, early in 1950 which will be called the Third National Labor Congress of Colombia. The purpose of this will be to declare the adhesion of UTC syndicates to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). According to Puentes Vanegas, the leader of the UTC, Justiniano Espinoza, stated that the ICFTU will support the UTC.
2. Puentes Vanegas frankly reported that the CTC is in an extremely precarious position and that the national government is obviously making every effort to liquidate it. In addition, the UTC has been making great strides in organizing the workers of the country, while the CTC has been slipping. Vanegas added that he had written to Lombardo Toledano, head of the CTAL to which the CTC is affiliated, to explain the problem of the CTC. Lombardo Toledano replied that a CTAL delegate would visit Colombia within the next few months to review the situation. In Vanegas' opinion, it would then be too late to save the CTC.
3. The Communists were told by Puentes Vanegas that the CTC must be careful in transmitting messages to its affiliates via cable and telephone now that General Rojas Pinilla is Minister of Communications, since it must be assumed that censorship will be exercised. Juan Bercoe, a traveling agent of the CTC who has just completed a survey of the unions of the FEDENAL, found them totally opposed to any type of strike, now or in the future. FEDENAL leaders are reported to be losing their revolutionary character and are actually drawing up petitions for submission to the government complaining about the recognition of the right of the navigation companies of the Magdalena River to hire and dispose of crews according to the volume of traffic.
4. As a result of effective government propaganda in labor circles, the Communists have noticed that numerous Party members and sympathizers are dropping from the ranks. Jesus Villegas Palacio pointed out that the directors of national, departmental and municipal public works called a meeting of labor leaders

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Document No. 008  
No. Change in Class ☐  
☒ Declassified  
Class. Changed To: TS S C  
Auth.: HR 70-2  
Release 1998/06/27 : CIA

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Approved For Release 1998/06/27 : CIA-RDP82-00457R004100430008-2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

R004100460008-2

to discuss the government's decision to support labor in return for cooperation on the part of labor leaders in stamping out all elements working against the government. The government is directing its efforts against the Liberal Party as well as the Communists.

5. The case of the government against the CTC is to be opened in January 1950 by the Fourth Labor Judge, Eduardo Castro Osorio. The government petitioned for the dissolution of the CTC in August 1949, and after preliminary hearings the case was held in abeyance until the expiration of the terms of some Liberal members of the National Labor Tribunal. In January, the government expects to have a majority on the tribunal, and it is believed that the decision will be against the CTC and the organization will be dissolved.

